Creek Permits & Resources

Contra Costa County requires you to obtain a Drainage/Flood Control permit if you plan to modify the flow of water, or work in, or build near, a creek or channel in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Please call the **County's Application & Permit Center,** (925) 335-1360, to inquire about your specific project before beginning any work in or near a creek. You may also contact the **Public Works Flood Control** at (925) 348-6810.

Other local, regional, State and Federal permits may also be required which may be obtained by using the **Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA)**. This single application allows you to apply to multiple permitting agencies with one form, see www.abag.ca.gov/bayarea/sfep/projects/JARPA/JARPA.html

The **Urban Creeks Council's Streamside Management Program for Landowners in Contra Costa County (SMPL)** provides FREE advice about creek care, restoration, and maintenance for your unique situation. Call to schedule a free consultation at (510) 540-6669 or go online to www.urbancreeks.org.

Contra Costa County Ordinance Code, go to www.ordlink.com/codes/ccosta/ - see Section 1010 for Drainage; Section 1014 for Stormwater Management and Control; and Section 914.14 for Creek Structure Setback requirements.

Public Works Maintenance - (925) 313-7000Call to report trees that have fallen into waterways and erosion/bank failures.

County Watershed Program - (925) 313-2236Call to report illegal dumping in waterways, or for more information about your creek or items in this brochure.

Why Protecting Your Creek is so Important

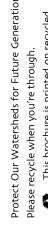
Understanding how to care for your creek is crucial to maintaining and improving the health and value of your property, your community and Contra Costa County.



Typically homeowners own up to the center of the creek and not just to the fence line. These privately owned creeks are an important part of our county's drainage system.

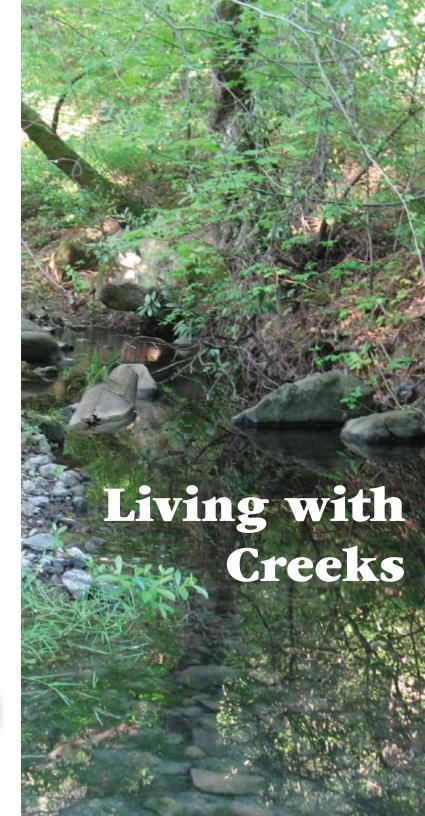
Through proper care of your creek, its creek banks and creek-side vegetation, you will:

- ✓ enhance your property
- ✓ prevent erosion and flooding
- ✓ preserve water quality
- ✓ enhance fish and wildlife habitat









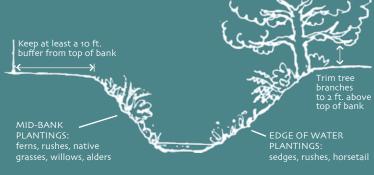
Living with Your Creek

If your property has a creek or a waterway flowing through it, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to maintain it. Proper creek care includes:

- ✓ Removing blockages that could cause flooding.
- ✓ Keeping banks vegetated to prevent erosion.
- ✓ Preventing pollutants from entering waterways.
- ✓ Removing trash to help maintain a healthy watershed.

As a property owner, you will be held responsible for any damages to waterways that result from neglect or unpermitted activities. You are also responsible for the actions of your gardeners, landscapers, maintenance workers and contractors.

It is against the law to block drainages within the County and illegal to cause discharges of pollutants to the storm **drain system** including our creeks and waterways.



Creek Friendly Planting and Maintenance

6 Ways to Keep Creeks Healthy

Maintain AT LEAST a 10 foot buffer from the top of creek banks. Keep the buffer area clear of liquids, chemicals, vehicles and debris.

Trim back tree limbs 2 feet above the top of the bank and remove low lying branches while retaining the canopy near the creek.

Keep your creek banks vegetated with low groundcover to minimize soil erosion. Plant native plants appropriate for your creeks banks.

Prevent invasive plants like ivy, vinca, arundo or blackberry from being established along creek banks.

Prevent contaminants from entering **the water** by limiting fertilizer and pesticide use. Avoid routine perimeter spraying for ant control; use integrated pest management (IPM) practices.

Minimize impervious surfaces so that stormwater is allowed to soak into the ground rather than run off directly into waterways or stormdrains.

6 Things NOT to do to Creeks

The following activities can cause flooding and are PROHIBITED without a Drainage/Flood Control permit:

Never install or build structures near a waterway without first contacting the County's Application & Permit Center to find out if you need a permit.

Don't allow any obstruction in a natural creek or man-made (improved) channel.

Never deposit or dump any material (including yard waste) on a creek bank or in a creek or channel.

Don't excavate, grade or alter a channel, or reduce the holding capacity of any waterway.

Avoid destroying or significantly altering riparian or bank-stabilizing vegetation (including cutting, clearing, burning and removing) except as necessary to maintain the creek's water flow capacity.

Do not plant any shrub, vine or tree within a riparian corridor without a written permit.

Our Creeks Are in Trouble!

With hundreds of miles of creeks in our County, even seemingly minor incidents can have significant impact on the health of our waterways.







Help Prevent This from Happening to Our Creeks

6 Things to Keep Out of Creeks

Dirt (from bare and eroded creek banks or disrupted soil) results in suspended sediment and loss of habitat and capacity.

Chemicals (from petroleum products, pesticides and herbicides) severely alter water quality and threaten aquatic organisms and plants.

Nutrients (from fertilizers, animal waste and failed septic systems) cause algae blooms and stagnant water which lowers dissolved oxygen levels killing aquatic life.

Bacteria (from animal waste and failed septic systems) make waterways toxic for all forms of life and for recreational activities.

Trash and debris (from illegal dumping, dispersed litter) causes storm drain blockage, drainage problems and wildlife impairment; acts as a magnet for more waste resulting in aesthetic issues and decreased property values.

Green waste, mulch (from landscaping and yard maintenance) compacts riparian (creekside) soil, restricts native plant growth and depletes the oxygen available for aquatic life.